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A-ONE #0911   03/16/07

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->From the Editor's Keyboard   "Saying it like it is!"
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New England weather - ya gotta love it. There's an old adage here in New
England that is quite appropriate, and quite often true: "If you don't
like the weather, wait a minute." As I'm sitting here putting together
this week's issue, it's early Friday morning. Well, early by my standards!
This past Wednesday, we were enjoying temperatures in the upper 60s and
lower 70s in some areas. I uncovered the barbecue that afternoon and
cooked a delicious steak. Spring was definitely in the air. The only
remaining snow on the ground was in the form of a couple of almost-melted
small patches where small mounds had formed. And, there was still ice
sitting on top of our pool cover. Well, according to the forecast last
night (I haven't dared listen to one yet today!), we're supposed to get
a Nor'Easter today - around a half foot of snow. It was supposed to have
started around the morning rush hour, but the skies are still empty, but
threateningly gray.

I drove my wife to work this morning because she's not crazy about
driving in a lot of snow. City folks! And, I dragged the snowblower out
of the garage, anticipating the need to use it again. It's hard to
believe that earlier in the week I had received an e-mail from my local
golf course telling me that the driving range was now open and that the
course was day to day! I almost headed over there to hit a bucket or two
(that's a bucket or two of golf balls, Joe!!), but I decided not to get
too enthusiastic this early in the year. However, I did move my golf
clubs from the corner of my porch to a more accessible spot! I'll
probably clean it out this weekend so I don't have to worry about that
later.

So, as I've been forced to convert from my teeshirt and shorts from earlier
in the week back to thermal and fleece in anticipation of the snow and
much colder temperatures, let me take this time to wish you all a Happy
St. Patrick's Day. yeah, sure and begorrah, we're all Irish this
weekend! Make sure that you be a-wearin' o' the green!

Until next time...

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                    MintNet Driver for SCSI/Link

A freeware MintNet driver for the Daynaport SCSI/Link is now available.
This is the first public beta, so please watch out for and report any
bugs ;-) You can download it from the following URL:

        http://www.anodynesoftware.com/ethernet/main.htm

Roger Burrows
Anodyne Software

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                         PEOPLE ARE TALKING
                       compiled by Joe Mirando
                         joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, another week has come and gone, and
I'm still hunting for a job. I've got to tell ya... it's been a tough
month. I never expected to feel like I'd been kicked in the gut after
leaving a job that had taken so much out of me, but that's exactly what
it feels like.

Actually, it feels like 'defeat'... Like I failed, like I 'missed the
bar' somehow. Well, intellectually, I know that's not really the way it
is. But that's the way it FEELS.

On the job-hunt front, I've now gotten my resume into shape and gotten
it online. Unfortunately, there's been much less excitement among
employers over it than I'd hoped. I DID, however, get an offer from the
government. Yeah. They want me to... ummm... 'be all that I can be'.
Can't you just see Bill Murray in the movie 'STRIPES'? [grin]

Anyway, let's get to the news, hints, tips and info available from the
UseNet, okay?

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
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I'm going to repeat a message or two here so that we can get a grasp on
a current conversation. Last week, Fred Horvat asked about using
networking under MagiCMac. In part, he posted this:

"...a program called MACSTIP that does what I am after.

I've never heard about this program before as I am sure most of you have
not either.

Also I read bits and pieces translated from German or French about a
program called ICAT that sounds like it may do the same thing.

I have a web page translated on this printed out and will have to study

it closer to see if in fact this will do what I am after."

Now Fidel-Sebastian Hunrichse-Lara tells Fred:

"Auto STip v1.0 and MacSTip v0.9d are components of MacTCP-Connect!

You surely mean In2Cat with IN2CAT.DLL - this is M_PC only!

<http://www.dimitri-junker.de/software/cat/cat.html> is your friend!"

Fred now asks Fidel-Sebastian:

"Cool, Where do I get MacSTIP and how do I configure it?"

Fidel-Sebastian replies:

"Ask for MacTCP-Connect directly at ASH - Oliver Buchmann
<mailto:Oliver.Buchmann@application-systems.de> will surely help you...

[Configuring] Isn't necessary! STip v1.0 starts from the AUTO folder and
you must start MacSTip v0.9d manually at the Mac side - after that
ICONNECT can now connect via the Mac OS TCP/IP network... that's all!"

My co-Managing Editor and our fearless Publisher, Dana Jacobson, posted
this plea from a voice from the past:

"I received the following message from an Atari user of yore,
pertaining to emulator issues and potential for some present needs. I
have suggested that she check here and ask specific questions, but for
now, I told her that I would put her message out here because this is
probably the best place for her to get answers and/or suggestions.

HI Dana-

Hope you are doing well.

It's me Jen Larkin. You may remember me. My dad (John Larkin) and I
were members of SSAG a *long* time ago. For perspective, I remember
talking on the BBS's and coming to the meetings at age 13, back...

I came to the Delphi forum looking to see if there were any Atari
people still kicking around, because I have some emulator questions.

In modern times, I use a G4 ibook for graphics design work. I actually
have my own online business - Designs by Jen L -
http://www.cafepress.com/lovejml.
This venture requires high resolution
graphics, so I do my designing in Photoshop. However, I'm finding I
need to rediscover Degas Elite, Spectrum 512 and Crackart, because
they provide better relative functionality than Photoshop offers
in either CYMK or index mode, and I feel I will design with more
precision and attention to detail if I am forced to adhere to the very
strict color management offered in the old ST programs.

Anyway, I used to have NoSTalgia running decently on an indigo ibook a
few years ago, but it doesn't seem to like OS X 10.3.9. I've tried

running both Hatari and Aranym (sp?) with EmuTOS, which is
abysmal version of TOS by the way, to no real avail. I came by looking
to see if there was anyone out there who could advise me on
configuring one of these emulators, or if there is another solution
that I'm missing (OpenGEM perhaps?). Unfortunately, support for the
various emulators has dropped off astronomically in the last couple of
years. I e-mailed the creator of Nostalgia two months ago
asking how to make Nostalgia run emuTOS without bombing, and how to
make it access the hard drive (easily done under OS 10.2.8). No
response. Not even an auto bounce!

Unfortunately, I have none of my old hardware. Regrettably, the bulk
of it was sold or given away 9 years ago, when my father passed away.
The only vestiges of my ST ownership are a few old manuals (GFA basic
and Tigercub!) that I found in my mother's basement, which I now keep
for purely sentimental reasons.

So if you are still an Atari enthusiast, and can help me out, or at
least point me in the direction of someone who can I'd greatly
appreciate it.

'Mr. Maddog' jumps in and tells Dana (and Jen):

"The current version of NoSTalgia now runs on Mac OS X. You can get it
at http://users.skynet.be/sky39147/ and it's your best bet for running
low rez ST art programs.

MacAranym is better suited for running GEM stuff only since it uses
FreeMINT (EmuTOS is just to get MiNT going). You can also run Hatari
using a real TOS image, though I never actually tried it."

Francois LeCoat adds:

"For OSX.3.9 working version of MacAranym, you may appreciate the
usage of the preconfigured mini pack that is located on my site.

Please have a look at <http://eureka.atari.org/MacAranym.zip> that
I do my best to keep up to date. Your remarks are welcome. You can
always ask questions on ARAnyM's users list <http://aranym.org/>

I personally own a dual-G4@1.25GHz running OSX.3.9 and MacAranym."

'PPera' adds:

"Emutos is in very early stage, and it may happen that it will be never
finished, as many of too ambitious projects around. Hatari is under
active development, and you may try to use it with some of official
TOS (1.62 for STE). Just look around, and you will find it on the WEB. I
don't know of anything better for the MAC. Usage of hard disk inside
emulator is solved pretty good – you can map some of your local
directories as partition for emulated Atari and/or using image file of
some drive – there is sample image for download on Hatari WEBsite.
Everything is configurable via config menu."

Jen now magically appears and posts:

"Thanks everyone for your suggestions. I do have some regular TOS images. If I remember correctly, "Rainbow" TOS (1.4) was the one that seemed to be the most stable with older software - at least on my old hardware - so that's what I will try first.

Mr Maddog:

 I recently downloaded NoSTalgia 1.42. Made the HDD_C file as instructed, but I can't get it to recognize my hard drive no matter what I do. Any ideas?

Thanks again for your suggestions and help.

Update

I now have Hatari up and running, using Rainbow TOS. I have it set in ST mode (STe mode is a bit glitchy), And as long as I use a native ST screen resolution (no VDI mode), I can run Degas Elite fine. :) I'll try crackart and Spectrum next."

Our buddy Hallvard Tangeraas posts this about ethernet solutions:

"All this talk about Ethernet for the ST has gotten me curious and wondering if I could add something like that for my recased Mega STe. So far I've found the following:

- various VME boards made specifically for the Mega STe: either near-impossible to find, too expensive or don't work well.

- NetUSBee (http://hardware.atari.org/netusbee/netus.htm) USB and networking in one plug-in card and apparently also available! Sounds promising, but in my case I'd rather not plug anything more into my already over-filled cartridge port.

- various cartridge adapter solutions: superceeded by NetUSBee as far as I know and no longer available

- Daynaport SCSI networking adapter (http://www.anodynesoftware.com/ethernet/main.htm): sounds promising as well, but since I'm not sure if I will attach any other SCSI devices permanently to my Link 97 and this solution needs that I don't know if this is for me.

- EtherNEA=

software:
http://home.arcor.de/thomas.redelberger/prj/atari/etherne/index.htm

hardware:
http://www.asamnet.de/~hilgarte/

This solution seems to use the ACSI port (not SCSI) which I hope has a "thru" port which will allow me to plug my Link 97 into and get SCSI for hard drives etc.

Apparently it's an adapter which allows for a standard PC Networking card to be plugged in. Doesn't seem to be readily available though.

- Ethernet adapter II (http://www.asamnet.de/~hilgarte/). Another ACSI port adapter. But it doesn't seem to have a "thru" connector either. I

also don't know if it's available any longer.

Anything else I can use? Preferably something that connects inside the machine (I don't mind soldering or even making the whole card myself just as long as I don't have to design it myself!), or to the ACSI port (with a "thru" port!) or through an SCSI adapter such as the Link 97. As I said earlier, I don't think using the cartridge port is suitable in my case as I already have 4 devices there.

By the way, it has to work with TOS 2.06 as well as MagiC."

Mike Freeman seizes upon something that Hallvard says and asks him:

"Is there a way to plug more than one thing into the cartridge port? I have a Cubase Audio dongle on my Falcon that's inside my recasing job, so I'm not able to use any other cartridge port devices (like NetUSBee, etc.) in any practical way. Something that allows more than one item to be plugged in would be very helpful, if it exists."

Hallvard replies:

"Yes, for dongle based programs such as Cubase as you mention (and Notator SL in my case) there are cartridge expansion devices available (or were available I should say), but they only allow you to select one cartridge device at a time.

These devices were made for situations where you have several dongle based programs and you don't want to switch off the computer in order to change dongles, then power up again.

The device in question really needs a "through" connector so that another cartridge device can be plugged into it and be accessed at any time. This is what my C-Lab/Emagic hardware add-on devices have."

Mike replies:

"Great! I never go online and use Cubase at the same time, so switching between an Ethernet device and Cubase dongle shouldn't be an issue. Do you have the name of this cartridge expansion device so I could track one down? Or, does anyone out there have one they want to get rid of? Thanks for the info!"

Hallvard tells Mike:

"I don't have one for sale or know anyone else who has, but who knows what fellow Atari users have in their closets (or ex-Atari users). Since I use Notator I've bought C-Lab/Emagic's "Combiner":
http://www.notator.org/html/notator_faq.html#combiner

Then there's the Cartmaster from Wizztronics:
http://www.notator.org/html/notator_faq.html#cartmaster
(According to their website they seem to have a "low cost" (ehm.... at US$ 80 I'm not sure if I agree) version of the above called the Cartmaster lite, though I'm not sure if it has a "pass-through" connector which you really should have for your Networking interface:
http://www.wizztronics.com/cartmast.htm)

>From Steinberg there's the Midex and Midex+ as far as I know. Since you use Cubase this might be your best bet for compatibility as if Cubase is something similar to Notator it automatically changes to the correct dongle when within the SoftLink environment. It's M.ROS for Cubase isn't it? Anyway, you're in luck because there's a little over a day left for an auctioned Midex+ at eBay Germany: http://cgi.ebay.de/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=230102638286

If you don't get your hands on that one you could always set up an automated search at eBay and get alerted whenever something like that comes up. Also try to find ex-Atari users and places where people would dump anything "worthless" (to them) meaning you might get a bargain on stuff like this which within the Atari community is probably worth a lot for those looking for them.

There are probably other cartridge devices around, but that's all I can think of at the moment...

Upon further inspection I see that there are several Midex devices available at the moment. So far only at eBay Germany: http://search.ebay.de/midex_W0QQfkrZ1QQfromZR8

I don't know where in the world you are, but you could always try to contact the sellers and ask them if they're willing to send to your area as in my experience they often are even if the auction page says they only send it within their own country.

I'd go for one of the Steinberg devices if I were you, to ensure full compatibility. It's been a while so I don't know the details, but I'm pretty sure the Midex+ has some advantages over the Midex. Perhaps someone else can fill you in on that."

Last but definitely not least, Dan Iacovelli posts this about AVC:

"AVC is returning to The Midwest Gaming Classic on June 9th and 10th to host The Atari Jaguar Festival (aka "Jagfest " to long time Atari followers) section.

AVC has been involved with Jagfest since 1997 when the first Jagfest was held in Rosemont,IL and we enjoyed being part of the festivities in some way or form at other shows.

At last year's show AVC produced a special black t-shirt to commemorate Jagfest 10th year anniversary. This year AVC continues the trend by producing four new items to celebrate Jagfest 10th year and they are:

Limited Edition Jagfest tour Shirt(based on tour shirts that music bands have. Front of the shirt has the Jagfest on tour Logo below that the words in RED "1997 to 2007" and "US To OverSeas" Back of the shirt has a smaller version of logo below that also in RED are that all known dates and locations of Jagfest(US and overseas)) from 1997 to current)

Black Jagfest on tour cap

White Jagfest on tour cap

Jagfest on tour trucker cap

(all caps have the jagfest on tour logo below that are the words in
RED: "1997 to 2007")

The Tour shirt (and two of three caps) is scheduled to make it's
first appearance at the Jagfest section at Midwest gaming classic, where
AVC will be selling a limited supply of the Tour shirts and take orders
for it after they sell out.

(we will be taking orders for the caps as well for any other Jagfest
On tour items)

AVC also announces a Tour Shirt and a selected Jagfest on tour cap
will be a prize for this years Jagfest Tourney

All above mentioned items are currently on sale until August 1st then
their prices will go up.

The Limited Edition Tour shirt will be removed from the shop after
November 7th (the caps will however remain in the shop) orders for the
Jagfest on Tour items mentioned above can also be done online at:
http://www.cafepress.com/avcnews/1338959

For more information on Jagfest at Midwest Gaming Classic, go to:
http://www.midwestgamingclassic.com/content.php?id=jfest "

Well folks, that's it for this time around. Tune in again next week,
same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying
when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - PS2 Gets 'God of War II"!
  """""""""""""""""""""""""""""   Mind Control for Video Games!
                                   Adult Ownership Increases!
                                   And more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News   - The Latest Gaming News!
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

    Award-Winning Franchise Returns With God of War II For PlayStation2

Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA) announced Tuesday the release
of God of War II, the highly anticipated sequel to the multi-award winning

God of War, available exclusively for PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. Available at $49.99, God of War II contains an extra bonus DVD with over two hours of behind-the-scenes content created for fans of the franchise. Additionally, SCEA officially announced that an original God of War game will be released in the future, exclusively for PSP (PlayStation Portable) handheld entertainment system.

In God of War II, developed by SCEA's Santa Monica Studios, players rejoin Kratos and continue his epic adventure through the dark, violent world of Greek mythology as he journeys to the far reaches of the earth, defeating untold horrors. Armed with a new set of combat moves and magic, in addition to some of the weapons and skills from the original God of War, players will lead Kratos in battle against Colossus, Cyclops, Cerberus, the Flying Gryphon and many more great beasts of Greek mythology.

Following in the footsteps of its predecessor, God of War II promises high quality gameplay and is the must-have title for 2007. With fan anticipation and a 96% rating on GameRankings, supported with the following high review scores from leading gaming media outlets: IGN - 9.7, GameSpy - 5/5, 1up - 9.5/10, Gamezone - 9.5/10, GameInformer - 9.75/10, and GamePro - 5/5, God of War II spurred more than one million retail orders prior to launch.

"God of War II demonstrates our continued commitment to provide compelling content for the PlayStation 2 and sets the stage for the God of War franchise to become a staple across the PlayStation family of products," said Jeff Reese, director, software marketing, SCEA. "There is so much more of the God of War story left to tell and we are excited to bring the franchise to PSP - fans may even see their esteemed God of War in full 1080p HD in the not-too-distant future."

God of War II brings players back to the violent world of Greek mythology where they last left the vicious ex-Spartan warrior Kratos atop his godly throne as the new God of War. In God of War II, Kratos must journey to the far reaches of the earth and defeat untold horrors and alter that which no mortal, or god has ever changed, his fate.

God of War II sets an epic stage for a devastating mythological war to end all wars. Armed with the deadly blades and blistering rage, players will be aided by new breath-taking magic and new brutal combat moves. The journey will take them through vividly striking environments where they will be faced with a labyrinth of challenging puzzles and mini-games intricately woven into the story. The violence will come to life in gory detail as Kratos encounters new mythical characters, and competes in epic boss battles in his quest.

The award winning franchise will continue the story of Kratos with an original game developed exclusively for PSP system. More information will be available soon.

Mind Control for Video Games

Video game players might soon use their thoughts instead of joysticks to control on-screen characters, if they wear a helmet released Wednesday by Emotiv Systems Inc.

The "Project Epoc" headset looks like a bicycle racer's helmet, but instead of protecting the skull, it detects the brainwaves inside it,

using technology similar to electroencephalography found in medical settings.

Emotiv, a privately-held startup firm in San Francisco, has applied the technology to video games with the company's first product, the Emotiv Development Kit (EDK). The kit allows game developers to attach dozens of thoughts and emotions to the actions in their virtual worlds, Emotiv said.

A game designed with EDK could allow players to move objects on the screen without touching a keyboard or joystick, make the character smile or wink when they do, or require a human player to stay calm so his character does not panic and reveal a hiding place in a stealth game.

The headset is tuned finely enough to distinguish between a player's mental commands to lift a virtual item or to push, pull or spin it, Emotiv said. That could allow gamers to experience telekinesis, moving objects with their minds instead of their muscles like Star Wars' Jedi knights.

Developers have long sought ways to let gamers interact in ways that offer more realism than simple devices such as joysticks. In November, Nintendo Co. Ltd. added physical motion to its system with the motion-sensitive Wii controller, while Microsoft Corp.'s Xbox 360 and Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.'s PlayStation 3 use vibrating handsets.

Developing a better gaming interface can mean big money for a technology company. On March 2, Sony lost a patent-infringement lawsuit, agreeing to pay US$90.7 million to Immersion Corp. for using its vibrating "haptic" technology. Microsoft had earlier agreed to pay $26 million.

Now Emotiv's product could open a new range of options for developers.

While computer games have evolved dramatically, user interfaces have remained fairly constant, according to Emotiv Board Director Ed Fries.

Emotiv's EDK connects its headset to three pieces of software: an Expressiv application that identifies the user's facial expressions, an Affectiv application that measures players' emotional states and a Cognitiv application that detects players' conscious thoughts about lifting or rotating the objects they see.

The company has not announced pricing for the EDK, but says the headset will be available to consumers in 2008. Emotiv is marketing its technology first to gamers, and plans to adapt it in the future for medicine, security, market research, accessibility design and interactive television.

Emotiv is one of the first companies to apply EEG technology to new uses, but it will face competition from other developers in the future, one analyst said.

"This technology is obviously way too early for us to really grasp the full possibilities. However it does appear that a lot of labs are working on similar things so it will definitely come to market in some shape or form," said Ben Bajarin, an analyst with Creative Strategies.

Video Games Grow Up As Adult Ownership Increases

Video games aren't just for the kids anymore. More than one in three U.S. adults who go online, or 37 percent, own a video game console and 16 percent own a portable gaming device, Nielsen//NetRatings said on Tuesday.

The majority of those console owners, 71 percent, are married, and 66 percent have at least one child in the household.

"As game consoles have become increasingly sophisticated, families have incorporated them into their centralized home media centers, which include the television, digital recording device, digital music player and the PC," said Carolyn Creekmore, senior director of media analytics, Nielsen//NetRatings.

Microsoft Corp. and Sony Corp. are positioning their Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 consoles as entertainment hubs for gaming, music and photo viewing amid a fierce battle for dominance in the $30 billion global videogame market.

Sony in particular is making a huge bet on the living room, having installed a Blu-ray high-definition DVD player in each of its new PS3 consoles, which are available for $500 or $600 in the United States, depending on the size of the unit's hard drive.

Nintendo Co. Ltd. competes with the Xbox 360 and PS3, but is selling a more basic machine with a motion-sensing controller that has won raves from gamers and non-gamers and introduced new audiences to video games.

Nintendo's Wii console sells for $250, half the cost of the high-end Xbox 360, and in January was the top-selling console in the United States.

Going into the current console war, analysts had predicted that adult gamers who grew up with the Japanese game maker's products - dubbed "Nintendads" - would want to introduce their children to Nintendo games and be a key market for its new machine.

PlayStation 3 Joins Fight Against Cancer

In an apparent attempt to one-up Nintendo's claims that its Wii system helps fight obesity, Sony on Thursday announced that its PlayStation 3 video game consoles will engage in a new battle - against disease.

The PS3 will have the capability to connect to Stanford University's Folding@home program, a distributed-computing project that focuses on what is called "protein folding." Stanford University is leveraging the PlayStation 3's Cell Broadband Engine in what could turn out to be a powerful distributed-computing network of PS3 systems helping study the causes of diseases such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, cystic fibrosis, and many cancers.

"In order to study protein folding, researchers need more than just one super computer, but the massive processing power of thousands of networked computers," Masayuki Chatani, corporate executive and CTO Computer at Sony Computer Entertainment, said in a statement.

Because protein folding is so complex, computers are used to perform simulations to study the process. And because these simulations can take

up to 30 years for a single computer to complete, Folding@home enables
this task to be shared among thousands of computers connected via the
network, using distributed-computing technology.

Once the data is processed, the information is sent back via the Internet
to the central computer. Sony said the Cell Broadband Engine processor
inside each PS3 is roughly 10 times faster than a standard mainstream chip
inside a PC, so researchers are able to perform the simulations much more
quickly, speeding up the research process.

With the latest system software update expected to become available at the
end of March, PS3 users can join the program simply by clicking on the new
Folding@home icon or optionally set the application to run automatically
whenever the PlayStation 3 is idle.

Mike Goodman, an analyst at the Yankee Group, said the Sony announcement
is further evidence of the changing role of game consoles. "Calling the
PS3 and the Xbox 360 game consoles is a misnomer because they are not game
consoles per se anymore. They are home entertainment systems," Goodman
said. In fact, positioning the PS3 and the Xbox 360 as a
critical-component, home-entertainment system, he added, is part of Sony
and Microsoft's strategy for expanding the marketplace for their hardware.

Gamers might care more about remote control joysticks than joining a
distributed-computing network, though. Even as the PS3 makes its play in
the battle against cancer, news came out that Nintendo's Wii was America's
best-selling video game console in the U.S. again in February.

According to the latest data released by the NPD Group, Nintendo reported
that consumers snapped up nearly every available system in America to
total more than 335,000 units sold. The only gaming system to outsell
Nintendo's Wii was Nintendo's portable DS handheld. The Nintendo DS sold
485,000 units. With this one-two punch, Nintendo systems gobbled up 54
percent of the video game hardware sales pie in February.

"The Wii is doing a little better than I thought it would do initially,
but I still think its long-term prospects are questionable," Goodman said.
With less than four months since the Wii's launch, it is too early to
tell the whole story, Goodman added, but he said he remains skeptical that
the concept is going to have legs, particularly as the prices for the
PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 come down.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online   -   Online Users Growl & Purr!
   """"""""""""""""""""

                    Commodore's Back With Gaming PCs

One of the best known computer brands of the 1980s, Commodore, is back at
Cebit 2007.

The name is most commonly associated with the Commodore 64 computer,

which hit the market in 1982 and went on to become the best-selling
computer of all time, according to some estimates. That machine was on
show at Cebit, but these days, the name is being attached to a new
generation of gaming PCs.

"That's really where the essence of the Commodore brand is, and there's
huge potential, and that's the idea now," said Bala Keilman, CEO of
Commodore Gaming. "At Commodore, we feel the time is right now. Gaming
is such a mass phenomenon worldwide, and the variety of consumers that it
talks to is really a broad demographic. The Commodore brand is really a
good brand to speak to consumers on that level."

There will be four basic models of PC available, and consumers will be
able to pick between multiple skins. Additional skins to suit almost any
gaming taste will also be available via Commodore Gaming's Web site.

The machines will also be preloaded with a Commodore 64 emulator and more
than 50 classic games.

Commodore will begin selling Intel-based gaming PCs from next month.
They'll be available online first and then in shops in Europe in May. Then
the company will look further afield.

"It's from America, huge in America, a lot of fans there, so that's where
we want to go very soon afterward. We're not holding back, we're already
preparing plans for that, and we'll see," Keilman said. "Hopefully, it
will be coming around summertime. I don't want to preempt anything, but
the U.S. will be the next big focus, and then we'll see."

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Game Over for China's Net Addicts

Combining sympathy with discipline, a military-style boot camp near
Beijing is at the front-line of China's battle against Internet addiction,
a disorder afflicting millions of the nation's youth.

The Internet Addiction Treatment Center (IATC) in Daxing county uses a
blend of therapy and military drills to treat the children of China's
nouveau riche addicted to online games, Internet pornography, cybersex
and chats.

"I gradually became obsessed," said Li Yanlin, a university student whose
grades plunged after he became addicted to Internet games. But after
several weeks at the Daxing facility, the 18-year-old said he "recognized
the falseness of online gaming."

Concerned by a number of high-profile Internet-related deaths and juvenile
crime, the government is now taking steps to stem Internet addictions by

banning new Internet cafes and mulling restrictions on violent computer games.

The government-funded Daxing center, run by an army colonel under the Beijing Military Hospital, is one of a handful of clinics treating patients with Internet addictions in China.

Patients, overwhelmingly male and aged 14 to 19, wake up in common dormitories at 6.15 a.m. to do morning calisthenics and march on the cracked concrete grounds wearing khaki fatigues.

Drill sergeants bark orders at them when they are not attending group and one-on-one counseling sessions. Therapy includes patients simulating war games with laser guns.

The IATC's tough love approach to breaking Internet addiction is unique to China, but necessary in a country with over two million teenage Internet addicts, according to facility staff.

"Many of the Internet addicts here have rarely considered other peoples' feelings. The military training allows them to feel what it's like to be a part of a team," said Xu Leiting, a psychologist at the hospital. "It also helps their bodies recover and makes them stronger."

The IATC has treated 1,500 patients in this way since opening in 2004, and boasts a 70 percent success rate at breaking addictions.

The fees cost about 10,000 yuan ($1,290) a month, nearly a year's average disposable income in China. But the center takes on pro bono cases for poor families, said Tao Ran, its director.

"There is no trend for Internet addiction as far as social or economic status, or geography, are concerned. So long as they can get access to a computer, there will be addiction," Tao said.

At the end of 2006, China had 137 million Internet users, an increase of 23.4 percent from the previous year.

Of users under 18, an estimated 13 percent - or 2.3 million - are Internet addicts, according to a 2006 study by the China National Children's Center.

Internet addiction rates posted in Western studies vary wildly, with little consensus as to what constitutes addiction and whether the concept exists.

A Stanford University of Medicine report in 2006 found one in eight adults find it hard to be away from the Internet for several days, but the report was inconclusive as to whether excessive use could be defined as an addiction.

China's health authorities, however, have few illusions about placing Internet addiction on a par with alcoholism, drug-taking and gambling.

"The effects are the same," Tao said. "Some addicts drop out of school, some mug people for money, steal and sell their families' things to keep playing games. Some end up killing themselves because they feel life has no point."

The social consequences of addiction had caught the government off guard - as had the Internet's explosive growth.

"Suddenly, from a handful of users in 1997, China now has over 130 million. People can get online in the most remote places. The legal system did not have time to develop," Tao said.

Addiction to the Internet is blamed for most juvenile crime in China, a number of suicides, and deaths from exhaustion by players unable to tear themselves away from marathon game sessions.

In 2005, a Shanghai court handed a life sentence to an online game player who stabbed a competitor to death for stealing his cyber-sword - a virtual prize earned during game-play.

The rising tide of Internet-addicted youth has prompted the government to ban new Internet cafes in 2007, which are seen in China as breeding grounds for social delinquency.

Delegates at the National People's Congress, China's annual session of parliament, have proposed stricter criminal punishments for Internet cafe operators who admit minors, and have flagged restrictions on violent games.

"Even President Hu Jintao talked of developing a scientific and civilized Internet environment recently," Tao said.

But China's Internet addiction is not merely a product of an imperfect regulatory system, Xu Leiting said.

"The main cause of Internet addiction is that parents' expectations for their children are too high," said Xu.

With education perceived by many parents as the only means of advancement in an ultra-competitive society of 1.3 billion people, some lock their children up to study and ask teachers to assign them extra homework.

The pressure can be too much for some children, Xu said, especially if they fail.

"Then they escape to the virtual world to seek achievements, importance and satisfaction, or a sense of belonging."

Apple Releases Mac OS X v10.4.9

Apple on Tuesday released Mac OS X v10.4.9, available in both client and server versions for PowerPC and Intel-based Macs. The updates are available for download through the Software Update system preference pane, and can also be had from the Apple Downloads Web page.

Specific changes in the 10.4.9 release include improvements to raw camera file support; handling of large or malformed images that could cause crashes; image capture performance; mouse scrolling and keyboard shortcuts; font handling; playback quality and bookmarks in DVD player; USB video conferencing cameras for use with iChat; Bluetooth devices; browsing AFP servers; Apple USB model; Windows-created digital certificates; Open and Print dialogs in Rosetta-based applications on Intel-based Macs; time zone and Daylight Savings Time changes for 2006 and 2007, and security updates.

Apple's Web site has further details about what's specifically changed in Mac OS X v10.4.9, as well. Highlights include improvements to .Mac sync performance and sync issues; fixes for wake from sleep issues with Bluetooth peripherals; changes to iCal; support for USV Video Class webcams in iChat; iSync support for more devices; WPA2 encryption support in Network Diagnostics; performance issues related to Intel iMacs working on high-speed network switches; improvements to OpenGL graphics reliability in World of Warcraft and more.

Does Free Domain Registration Promote Malware?

Cheap or free registration of new domain names drives the growth in Web sites used for spamming or hosting malicious software, according to research from McAfee.

The study, released Monday, highlights continuing problems concerning how Web sites are registered and the ease with which bad actors can change Web sites to continue online scams.

McAfee analyzed 8.1 million of the world's most trafficked Web sites registered on 265 top-level domains (TLDs), such as ".com" and ".biz" along with country-specific ones, such as ".jp" for Japan.

McAfee offers a free tool, SiteAdvisor, that determines if Web sites send spam, host bad programs or have excessive pop-ups. McAfee, which bought SiteAdvisor Inc. in April 2006, also offers a pay version with more advanced features.

Small islands with their own TLDs remain troublesome. For example, some 18.5 percent of Web sites registered under the ".st" TLD are considered "risky" for either spam or other malicious activity, McAfee said. The TLD belongs to Sao Tome and Principe, a country of two volcanic islands west of Gabon.

Tokelau (.tk), a territory of New Zealand in the south Pacific, and Niue (.nu), also in the south Pacific east of Tonga, give out domains for free. That's good for scammers, who often need to register new domains as older ones are blocked by security software.

Niue also allows anonymous registration of Web sites. Nine years ago the country declared "no tolerance" policy against spammers, but McAfee said it wasn't a deterrent.

The safest TLDs belong to countries with stronger registration rules. Japan, Ireland, Sweden and Finland require a local postal address, while businesses in Norway have to register with the government to get a ".no" domain. Consequently, McAfee found the lowest percentage of bad Web sites in those domains.

Australia and Canada, McAfee said, require a local contact for registration, which often deters spammer since registrations take more time.

The ".info" domain ranked first among generic TLDs for its percentage of risky sites, at 7.5 percent, McAfee said. The domain also hosts many Web sites that send "spammy" e-mail, the vendor said.

SiteAdvisor submits an e-mail address to Web sites and counts how many e-mails are received. Users have a 73.2 percent chance of receiving a spam e-mail by giving their address to a random ".info" site, McAfee said.

The ".com" domain - created in the 1980s - came in second for risk, with 5.5 percent of its Web sites considered questionable, McAfee said.

McAfee Maps Internet's Danger Spots

How can you and your business avoid the riskiest Web sites? A new research report by security software vendor McAfee, released Monday, indicates that you can do more than simply notice if the English seems badly translated.

Like bad neighborhoods, some domains have a higher percentage of problematic sites than others. Overall, the company found that 4.1 percent of all tested sites require a warning.

To see the warnings, McAfee is offering SiteAdvisor, available as a free download at www.mcafee.com. SiteAdvisor provides color-based ratings. Risky sites, which fail tests for spyware, adware, viruses, and the like, are given a red rating. A green rating, as any driver knows, means go. Yellow-rated sites require caution, as they pass the tests but still have such annoyances as excessive pop-ups.

In the free version of SiteAdvisor, users are steered away from the riskiest sites. A paid version of SiteAdvisor disables all interactions with dangerous sites.

About 5.6 percent of sites in the Romania domain (.ro) are risky, as are 4.5 percent in Russia (.ru). If you ever encounter a site ending in .tk, the domain of the tiny island of Tokelau, you might want to surf away as quickly as your browser can move. About 10.1 percent of sites with the Tokelau domain are suspicious, according to McAfee.

Some suspicious domains are not country-based. About 7.5 percent of all sites with .info were judged as risky, as were 5.5 percent of .com sites. Because of the sheer number of .com sites, about 86 percent of red and yellow sites were in that domain. McAfee found that if you give your e-mail address to a site with the .info domain, you have a 73.2 percent chance of getting spam e-mail as a result.

The least risky country domains are Finland (.fi, 0.10 percent), Norway (.no, 0.16 percent), Sweden (.se, 0.21 percent), Iceland (.is, 0.19 percent) and Ireland (.ie, 0.11 percent).

Lest you think the U.S. government has absolutely no redeeming qualities, .gov was the only domain with no risky sites out of the 265 top-level domains tested.

The kinds of functionality offered by SiteAdvisor will eventually "be folded into a larger tool for the enterprise," according to Natalie Lambert, an analyst with industry watcher Forrester Research.

She said that, while it might add some additional protection against phishing sites, SiteAdvisor as a standalone was intended primarily for

consumers and wouldn't be that useful for businesses.

Andrew Jaquith, an analyst with The Yankee Group, offered a different take. "The SiteAdvisor tool is extremely useful for employees to know what risk is involved in their Web surfing," he said. He noted that employees have been known to go to sites on company time that are not business-related.

"I do find the study to be a bit of 'fun facts' to know," he said. Since few people notice domains, he said it might have been better to have this kind of information broken down by type of site, such as entertainment, adult, games, or "get rich quick" sites.

U.S. Lawmakers Introduce New Spyware Bill

Two U.S. lawmakers have reintroduced a bill that would impose penalties of up to five years of prison time and fines for spyware activities.

The Internet Spyware (I-Spy) Prevention Act, introduced this week by Representatives Zoe Lofgren, a California Democrat, and Bob Goodlatte, a Virginia Republican, was one of two bills that passed the U.S. House of Representatives in May 2005. The Senate failed to act on both bills, partly because of concerns raised about the bills.

I-Spy, which passed the House on a 395-1 vote in 2005, would set prison terms of up to five years for people convicted of using spyware to access a computer without authorization or using the computer to commit another federal crime. The bill also would allow a jail term of up to two years for a person who uses spyware to obtain someone else's personal information or to defeat security protections on a computer with the intent of defrauding or injuring the computer owner.

The bill would protect "Americans from Internet crime while not impinging on software development," Lofgren said in a statement. "Spyware has become a plague for computer users, and Congress must address the mounting negative impact that it is having on our economy. Americans should not be afraid to use the Internet."

The legislation will punish "bad actors" while protecting legitimate online companies by not over-regulating, Goodlatte added in a statement.

House members introduced a second spyware bill, called the Spy Act, in February. That bill would prohibit keystroke logging, taking control of a computer without the user's consent, diverting Web browsers, using computers to create botnets and modifying a computer users' browser and security settings without permission.

But the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB), a trade group representing online advertisers, raised objections to the Spy Act this week. While the IAB supports large portions of the bill that prohibit spyware-like behavior, a part of the bill broadly prohibits information collection without prior permission from the computer user.

That portion carves out an exception for cookies, but that exception may be too narrow, said Mike Zaneis, the IAB's vice president for public policy. The bill could prohibit certain types of advertising technologies, including cookies or Java scripts of the future, he said. The IAB

testified against the Spy Act in a congressional hearing Thursday.

"The problem is, it's not technology neutral," Zaneis said in an interview. "The bill is just a blanket (prohibition) on technology, and then they try to carve out exceptions. We ought to regulate based on bad behavior."

The bill also gives exceptions to antispyware programs but those programs often delete legitimate software such as cookies, Zaneis said. Consumers should have the choice of what programs to remove, he said, instead of broad removals by antispyware vendors.

"There's a real push for them to block all in-line advertising," Zaneis said.

Sponsors of the bill have said the legislation is necessary to protect consumers against spyware. "It is critical that Congress swiftly pass legislation that will empower consumers to take back control of their computers and safeguard their personal information," Representative Mary Bono, a co-sponsor and California Republican, said in February.

Technology Cuts Down On Web Registrations

An emerging technology standard could be the answer to a major headache: It lets consumers use the same user name and password for hundreds of websites that require a sign-in.

OpenID's approach has quickly earned it the support of Microsoft, AOL and thousands of users online.

"It's all about convenience," says Raven Zachary, 33, a technology analyst for The 451 Group. He intends to use the same user name and password for dozens of social-networking and news sites.

Consumers establish an OpenID identifier in the form of a personalized Web address, such as http://jswartz.myopenid.com, at some 50 websites, including www.myopenid.com and www.typekey.com. When they do, one of 30 OpenID providers, including VeriSign and JanRain, is assigned to securely store the user's data.

OpenID users are asked for their personalized Web address whenever they visit one of hundreds of sites that support OpenID. That address is sent to their provider, which then confirms the identifier. The system is not for use on sensitive accounts for financial transactions.

"This is leading us on the path toward one user name and one password," says David Recordon, innovator for advanced products and research at VeriSign, the domain-name registrar.

The idea has resonated with the tech industry after several missteps, including that of Passport, Microsoft's failed attempt at a universal password sign-in.

Microsoft became the latest to throw its support behind the fledgling standard last month. The software giant is supporting OpenID in conjunction with CardSpace, a feature similar to OpenID that is built into the Windows Vista operating system. Symantec also threw its support behind

OpenID, as have hundreds of blogging and social-networking sites such as Digg.

As many as 1,200 sites offer some sort of OpenID services, reaching a potential 75 million people worldwide. Those figures could balloon to 15,000 sites and 250 million people this year, says Steve Kveton, CEO of JanRain, which provides ID services on the Internet.

"It's a little surprising," says Brad Fitzpatrick, OpenID's creator and chief architect at Six Apart, a blogging-software company.

To a lesser extent, OpenID is gaining support as a haven from identity theft, which has soared on the Internet.

Identity theft was the No. 1 gripe among consumers who filed complaints with the Federal Trade Commission last year. In 2006, 36% of 674,354 complaints to the FTC were for identity theft, the agency said in a report last month.

"The Internet was built without an identity system, which is incredible in retrospect," says Kim Cameron, chief architect of identity at Microsoft's Connected Systems Division.

"That limits what you can do with it and exposes you to theft, deception and spam."

Google Adopts New Privacy Measures

After years of discussion with privacy advocates, Google is adopting new measures that make it more difficult to associate Internet searches with online users. Google announced the revisions late Wednesday, pledging to protect the mountains of information it collects about the millions of users who interact with its search engine.

The company currently collects data on the search query itself, and the IP addresses associated with those queries, for as long as it deems the information useful. Going forward, Google said it will anonymize its server logs after a "limited period of time" unless it is legally required to retain the data longer.

However, even after Google implements this policy change in the coming months, Google's legal counsel said it would continue to keep server log data so that it can improve Google's services and protect them from security and other abuses. But, the company added, it will take steps to ensure the data can no longer be identified with individual users after 18 to 24 months.

Peter Fleischer, Google's privacy counsel in Europe, and Nicole Wong, Google's deputy general counsel, said company executives made the decision after talking with leading privacy stakeholders in Europe and the U.S.

"We think we're striking the right balance between two goals: continuing to improve Google's services for you, while providing more transparency and certainty about our retention practices," the attorneys wrote on Google's blog.

The Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT) in Washington is one of

those "stakeholders" to which Google referred. "We've been complaining to Google for several years trying to get them to keep the information they need only for the purposes they need," said CDT Deputy Director Ari Schwartz. "We feel this is a positive step in the right direction."

Google's counsel assured searchers that the company is working toward having the "best" privacy practices for its users. Those initiatives include designing privacy protections into its products, such as Google Talk's "off the record" feature or Google Desktop's "pause" and "lock search" controls.

It also means providing clear, easy-to-understand privacy policies that help consumers make informed decisions about using Google's services, the company said.

Google is not the only search engine to take a second look at privacy measures. AOL recently revamped its privacy policy after the search queries of 36 million of its users were posted online. For its part, MSN encrypts search data and draws from user history to serve up ads. Google, by contrast, serves ads on the basis of real-time search queries.

"It is healthy to have a robust set of different practices among search engines as long as the competition protects privacy," Schwartz said. "We are starting to see that take shape and the Google decision is a clear signal."

Although Google plans to dump data after a limited time, the company's legal counsel reminded users that they can choose to allow Google to retain their data for more personalized services, such as Search History, but Schwartz said that is ultimately not enough. Google can and should do more, he argued.

"Google is still not giving the user real choices about what to do with their information," he said. "At some point, we have to get to the point where people can decide what they want to keep and what they want to delete and make it easier for them to do."

                    Campaigner Vows To "Make Spammers Pay!"

An Internet consultant who won damages in a Scottish court after he received a single unwanted e-mail has launched a campaign to help people tackle "spammers."

Gordon Dick, 30, has set up a Web site with the motto "Make the Spammers Pay!" that tells people how to take legal action against those who send unsolicited email.

He faces an uphill battle as spam makes up about 80 percent of the billions of e-mails sent each day, according to U.S. Internet security company Postini.

Dick, who won 750 pounds ($1,452) plus costs in an Edinburgh court after suing over the unwanted e-mail last month, hopes others around the world will follow his lead.

However, the company which sent the e-mail denies sending spam and says his campaign will damage firms by deterring them from using e-mail as a

marketing tool.

"It was a major decision to take," said Dick, from Edinburgh, whose Web site is http://scotchspam.org.uk. "I had never been in a court before, I'd never dealt with the legal process and I was doing this unrepresented.

"The more familiar people are with the legal system, the more likely they are to make use of it, which is why I published how you could actually go about doing it."

His case has reignited the debate over how companies can use e-mail marketing without breaking anti-spam laws.

The Direct Marketing Association trade body estimates a quarter of legitimate bulk e-mail is not delivered.

Under European law, companies can only send marketing messages to consumers with their prior consent.

This rule is relaxed, however, if a company has gathered someone's address in the course of a sale and it gives the recipient a chance to object.

Transcom, a British-based Internet and satellite firm which sent the message to Dick, said it was not spam, but a single, annual marketing e-mail to customers.

Company director William Smith said Dick's address inadvertently entered his company's system when it received a group email which also contained Dick's name.

Smith argues that Dick did not even "win" the case, but was awarded damages by default after Transcom dropped its defense to avoid huge legal bills.

"I suppose we should have continued, but I didn't want a 50,000 pound bill for 750 pounds," he said. "Our lawyers said 'well look he's only asked for 750 pounds, if you persist in defending ... it's just going to run into thousands.'"

"We're not a marketeering company. There's no need to be labeled a spammer."

Dick said he did not want to stop companies from sending emails to genuine customers.

He also accepts his campaign can do little to stop the sort of spam that offers drugs, sex aids and weight loss pills. Many are sent by criminal gangs from outside Europe, putting the sender beyond the reach of EU law.

"They have to be dealt with by technological means of filtering," Dick said.

Scientists Show Thought-Controlled Computer at Cebit

Forget speech-recognition software: How about typing a letter just by thinking it?

In a quiet corner of the Cebit trade show a small Austrian company is showing a "brain-computer interface," a technology that could one day transform how we use computers, play video games and even talk to each other.

It sounds like science fiction but is a clever application of science and technology. The system does not really read thoughts; rather, it measures fluctuations in electrical voltage in the brain and translates them into commands on a computer screen.

The system consists of a cap that fits over the user's head, with a few dozen holes through which electrodes are attached so they rest on the scalp. The electrodes are connected via thin cables to a "biosignal amplifier," which transmits the signals from the brain to a computer.

Different parts of the brain are used to process different types of thoughts. Vertical and horizontal hand movements are handled in an area called the sensory motor cortex, for example, said Christoph Guger, CEO of g.tec, which built the BCI system shown here at the giant Cebit technology show.

To use a BCI to move a computer cursor, the electrodes are placed over the corresponding part of the brain, where they read tiny fluctuations in voltage and feed them into a software program that analyzes them to figure out what the person is thinking.

The software needs to be trained to read the signals, which takes several hours to do properly. The subject responds to commands on a computer screen, thinking "left" and "right" when they are instructed to do so, for example. Another test involves looking at a series of blinking letters, and thinking of a letter when it appears.

The software "learns" what the brain's voltage fluctuations look like when those directions or letters are thought of, Guger said.

The system today is also quite slow--even a trained system can "read" only 18 characters per minute, or three or four words. Still, that may be helpful for a disabled person who cannot communicate through speech or movement. About 200 disabled people worldwide are using the software at home to communicate, according to Guger, although they need professional help to set it up.

Another issue is accuracy. In a test at a conference in Austria about two years ago, 300 attendees were trained on the system for 30 minutes. After that time the system could figure out simple binary responses from most of the people 60 percent of the time--or "better than random," Guger said. For 7 percent of the people, the accuracy was more than 90 percent, he said.

The technology is advancing. Five years ago the system was too bulky to be transported easily, and now the various parts can fit in a shoebox. In 10 years it could be fast and accurate enough to commercialize in home PCs or games consoles, according to Guber.

"Ultimately you could have wireless contacts embedded in the brain, and communicate with others just by thinking," he said. "But then you really would have to worry about your wife finding out about your girlfriend."

At Cebit, a colleague of Guber's donned the BCI system and played the game "Pong" against a reporter. It has also been used to write letters, operate

artificial limbs and steer a wheelchair. "It's not safe enough for wheelchairs today though; if it reads a command wrongly you could veer off into the road," Guger said.

The study of BCI took off in the 1990s, primarily at three laboratories, in Austria, Germany and the U.S. There are now 300 laboratories working on it, Guger said. He completed his Ph.D. in BCI at the Graz University of Technology, in Austria, in 1999, he said.

He sells his BCI systems mainly to scientists for research work. They are priced from $26,000 to $132,000 depending on their sophistication. The company is showing a smaller, Pocket PC-based device at Cebit that starts at about $4,000. More information is at g.tec's Web site.

Measuring the brain's electrical activity like this is called electroencephalography, or EEG. It is noninvasive, meaning the electrodes are placed on the scalp without surgery, but it produces weaker signals and is subject to noise interference.

Invasive techniques produce better results but are tried only on patients who require brain surgery in any case, and on monkeys and other animals.

An engineer in the U.S. holds a patent on the general BCI concept, Guger said; other patents are held by universities for specific software algorithms used to decode the brain's signals.

G.tec's BCI is among the nominees for the European ICT Prize, the winners of which will be announced Friday. There are three grand prizes of about $264,000 each.

New IE7 Bug May Aid Phishers

A vulnerability in Microsoft Corp.'s Internet Explorer (IE) browser could help fraudsters make phishing Web sites appear legitimate, a security researcher reported Wednesday.

The flaw lies in the way IE7 processes a locally stored HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) error message page that is typically shown when the user cancels the loading of a Web page, said Aviv Raff, a security researcher based n Israel.

The error message tells the user that "navigation to the webpage was cancelled," and offers the user the opportunity to "refresh the page." If the refresh link is clicked, IE can be tricked into displaying the wrong Web address for a page. Raff has published proof of concept code that shows how IE can be made to display a Web page on his Web site as if it is from the cnn.com domain.

This flaw could be exploited by phishers who want to make their spoofed Web sites appear legitimate, Raff said.

"I can inject a script that will display anything I want in the page when the user clicks the 'refresh' link," he said via instant message. "Combining this with the design flaw, an attacker can render in the browser whatever he wants with whatever URL he wants in the address bar."

This type of bug is known as a cross-site scripting vulnerability. It

affects IE 7 on Vista and Windows XP, Raff added.

Microsoft could not immediately confirm Raff's findings, but the company issued a statement saying that it is investigating the issue and is "not aware of any attacks attempting to use the reported vulnerability or of customer impact at this time."

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